

## Instructions for Using the Keys to Puget Trough Terrestrial Plant Associations

1. Select a relatively uniform area of vegetation and topography to key out. A representative 1/10 acre plot is a simple way to examine a stand, just be sure the plot does represent the stand of interest.
2. "Present" means the species is found on a representative 1/10 acre plot, i.e. it regularly occurs in the stand.
3. This is not a classic dichotomous key but an abbreviated form of a dichotomous key. Each line is mutually exclusive from the next line down in the key. If the stand or plot meets all the criteria in a line, then read to the right or (if blank) to the next indented line down. If the stand or plot does not meet the criteria in a line, then go to the next line down the page that is not indented from the current line.
4. A dominance type key precedes keys to the individual associations within the dominance types.
5. Percentage values in the key (e.g., 25%) refer to % crown cover, that is the vertical projection below the entire crown of the plant, do not subtract for spaces between leaves and branches.
6. Snowberry in the key refers to both species of snowberry, common and creeping, unless preceded by the species name.
7. "+" = add the crown cover of each of the species indicated, e.g. 7+22 = 29% cover, overlap between the species gets counted twice.
8. "Dominant successful regeneration" refers to the tree species that is most abundant in < 5 inch dbh size classes (understory trees) and that has at least 30 individuals per acre of this size (at least 3 on a representative 1/10 acre plot).
9. "Olympic Mountains rainshadow" refers to a geographic and climatic area encompassing San Juan County, far western Skagit and Whatcom counties (Cypress, Guemes, Lummi, Fidalgo islands), northern and central Island County, northeastern Jefferson County (Miller and Quimper Peninsulas), and part of eastern Clallam County (Sequim Bay to Port Angeles).
10. **The key is not the classification.** After you have keyed out a stand, always read the association description of vegetation composition, geographic distribution, and physical environment. If it sounds like it fits in most regards, you have made a correct identification. If there are multiple inconsistencies between the stand and the description, the key probably was incorrect. In this case, you probably need to try the key again and follow slightly different leads or identify the stand by reading the descriptions.
11. In the interactive version of the key, clicking on an underlined item will take you to the appropriate key or description of the association.